

## Meet CFUS



Joseph C. (Joe) Hibbit  
Principal, President  
Los Angeles, California



Manny Mangahas  
Principal, VP—East Coast Operations  
Clifton, Virginia (Washington DC)



Burnie Reed  
Principal, VP—Midwest Operations  
Dallas, Texas

## CFUS Update!

### Industry: Legal

Based on partner's requirements, constructed a corporate-wide network to support remote access, centralization of application and security of data files.

### Service: IT Infrastructure

### Industry: Healthcare

Designed, developed, and implemented a patient referral system for healthcare clinics located throughout Europe.

### Service: Custom Application Development

### Technology : MySQL, Java

## The Importance of Brand "Sizzle"

There's an old saying in the restaurant business: "You sell the sizzle--not the steak." Regarding everything from marketability to sex appeal, if a franchise wants to achieve its true growth potential, it must stand out from the crowd and appeal to a particular franchise buyer.

Sizzle can be created by dazzling marketing campaigns, by the look of an operation or by the rapid growth of a particular market segment. Sizzle can come from innovative systems that bring additional profits to a tired industry, a wonderful recipe that drives customers to your door or from the right franchise marketing materials. It can come from "sexy" software, increased buying power, better support or a well-established brand in the marketplace. It can come from a number of places, but if you don't know what your sizzle is, you don't have it.

Fortunately, however, it's never too late to create it.

### It Starts with the Steak

No matter how good you are at creating brand "sizzle," it always starts with the steak--or,

in the case of franchising, it starts with the concept.

One of the most important elements when creating sizzle is credibility. In order to sell franchises, a company and its management team must first be credible in the eyes of its prospective franchisees. No matter how "hot" the concept, if you can't get your prospects to believe in you, you'll never sell to your concept's potential.

Credibility can be reflected in a number of ways: organization size, number of units, number of years in operation, look and feel of the prototype unit, quality of marketing materials, a blue-chip client list, publicity generated by the concept and the strength of management. More important, credibility is cumulative. The more of these credibility-builders you have, the more credibility you'll garner in the eyes of your prospective franchisee.

If you aren't there already, you can do a number of things to polish your credibility as a franchisor:

- Hire a designer to update the look and feel of your operation.

- Update your consumer marketing materials and website.

- Retain a PR firm to help you obtain press in the local market.

- Recruit an advisory board made up of your most prominent business acquaintances.

- Develop marketing materials that are better than those of your established competitors.

- And, from a self-serving perspective, retain the best consultants and attorneys you can afford when making the leap into franchising.

### Is Your Sauce Really Different?

If I were really pressed to name my favorite steakhouse, I think I would vote for Ruth's Chris. Now, over the years, I've eaten at a number of steakhouses, but for me, Ruth's Chris is the one with the most sizzle--literally. The way they achieve that sizzle isn't magic. It's competitive differentiation. They start with super-hot grills and top each steak with fresh melted butter. That's how they get the sizzle.

Are there other great steakhouses? Of course. But how do you--or I--differentiate one from the next? Melted butter, hot steaks and--of course--the sizzle.

While it may not be hot butter, every business needs a point of difference. The consultants at McMillan|Doolittle, who specialize in retail differentiation, have taken this differentiation a step further by explaining some of these basic tenets in what they call "EST theory." EST theory states that a business needs to carve out a unique position in the marketplace by developing an EST: Biggest (largest selection), Cheapest (lowest price), Hottest (newest fashion) or Easiest (best service). Each EST represents a specific consumer desire. And each represents something desirable in a retail environment.

But--and here's the part that may be counter-intuitive--you shouldn't try to be every EST. If you try to do it all, according to McMillan|Doolittle, you'll end up in the "Black Hole"--the place in the center of the EST positioning grid where mediocre companies go to die.

On closer examination, the underlying theory makes complete sense. You can't provide the most service and still have the lowest cost. You can't be an exclusive, high-fashion offering and still be the cheapest. And while this is a gross oversimplification of the theory (a more detailed understanding can be found at [www.mcmillandoolittle.com](http://www.mcmillandoolittle.com)), the point of the analysis is clear. It's better to be great at one thing than to simply be good at everything. "Me Too" franchises all too often fall, undifferentiated, by the wayside.

Marketing texts will refer to this principle as the Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Before succeeding in business--and by extension, in franchising--you must define and hone your USP. You must understand what makes you different from the next franchisor, and why your franchise is better than the franchise offered by your franchised competitors.

And remember, one franchisor's advantage can be made into a competitor's advantage. Consider the proposition of going head-to-head with an established giant in the industry. Sure, they have advantages in terms of brand recognition, but, as a new franchisor, you can sell against their size by emphasizing the personal involvement of the founder and a higher level of service.

Dare to be different. Differentiation can come in the form of proprietary products or services, a reduced investment cost, a unique marketing strategy or different target markets. It can be structured into your franchise agreement in the form of lower fees, bigger territories or increased support. Or it can come by redefining the marketplace.

If I were to say "hamburger franchise," chances are that one of three names would come to mind: McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's. So how do you compete with these 800-pound gorillas? One way is to choose to redefine the marketplace. Instead of being an "also ran" in the hamburger segment of the sandwich marketplace, you could compete for market leadership in the newly defined "gourmet hamburger" segment ... or the double-drive thru segment ... or the "healthy burger" segment--if you can make the business model work first.

#### Sell to the Steak-Lover

Another way to succeed in franchising is to appeal to a very specific and highly targeted franchise buyer. Buyer appeal can be created by the growth of a market (internet businesses), the look of a business (something fun), flexibility (homebased businesses) the return offered (pure ROI plays), or by the taste of a product (restaurants). But for some franchisees, it's the nature of the prospective franchise itself that makes the franchise attractive.

Century 21, for example, helped to revolutionize a marketplace that was dominated by independent real estate agents in the 1950s

and 1960s, by targeting a very specific franchisee. Optical franchisors such as Pearle Vision may have little appeal to the average franchise buyer, but likely have a much stronger appeal to an optician or optometrist. The examples of franchisors that have succeeded by targeting a very specific franchisee are numerous: direct sales franchisors targeting salespeople, complex restaurants targeting existing restaurateurs, internet franchises targeting techies--the list goes on and on.

The fact is, the more specifically you can target the right franchise candidate, the more likely a franchisor will succeed in rapidly selling franchises. For some franchisors, the nature of the franchise itself will dictate the nature of the franchise buyer. But for those franchises with a less obvious franchise prospect, the key lies in researching the demographics of your franchise buyer. Just as you would with your core concept, you must know your prospective buyer (your franchisee) as well as you know your own product.

#### A Steak by any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet

One of my early mentors once told me that "Names don't make companies--companies make names." And I'm reminded of this quote often when companies new to franchising inquire about the need for an established brand in order to franchise. While established brands like McDonald's certainly provide the franchisor with a huge advantage in the franchise marketplace, people sometimes forget that before McDonald's was a franchise icon, it was a one-unit operation that nobody outside of Southern California had ever heard of.

So how do you start to establish such a brand? The fact is, if you've been up and operating your business for any length of time, you already have.

**Staff Augmentation \* IT Consulting \* Corporate Identity \* Project-based Solutions**

Several weeks ago, I spoke with a four-office staffing company who was considering franchising as a means of expansion. They were thinking of changing their name, which mirrored the name of the founder, because they felt that their existing name didn't "sound like a franchise."

"Why would anyone ever want to use our name," they asked, "when we aren't a national brand?"

After spending some time with them, I realized they had a track record stretching back almost two decades. They had a blue-chip client list. And they had fantastic references who would swear by them.

So I asked them in return, "Who would stand a greater chance of success: a startup operator new to a market with no experience and no references, or a company who could walk into a prospective client and say, 'We're ex-

panding in your market, were established some 20 years ago, and here are the names of just a few of our Fortune 500 clients'?"

Like H&R Block, McDonald's, Snelling Personnel and many other franchises named after their founders, the brand is developed over time based on consistently delivering the steak you promised along with the sizzle you sold. If you can deliver on the steak, the sizzle is as easy as a little butter.

### Why collect data?

Good quality data underpins clinical care. In general practice clinicians and administrative staff code clinical conditions in a similar manner according to what are called Read Codes.

This means that reports can be run off to see how many patients there are who have coronary heart disease, for example. If you don't know how many there are you can't plan either on a one to one basis or on a population basis.

### Importance of data

A new 'Quality and Organisational framework' has been developed with expert input, which defines indicators of good patient care. Meeting targets around these indicators, will not only deliver better care but will also ensure that the practice is appropriately remunerated for the highest quality work. The first year of the contract is likely to be one of preparation where practices look at their patients, information systems, staff and skills mix in their move towards fulfilling the new contract. The work currently in progress with PRIMIS will stand all practices in good stead.

### Recording of data

It all starts with the data entry – recording a diagnosis of disease like diabetes, followed by blood pressure reading or a prescription. For any analysis of this information to be

useful, the data must be complete and accurate, and must be recorded in a consistent manner. For these reasons, all health professionals need to know how to use clinical computers and to enter clinical terms (Read Codes).

The PRIMIS project facilitator helps practices to understand the information they have and to turn raw data into effective action to improve care. We promote better data by providing comparative analysis of the data to practices with the details of their data quality in comparison to others. By comparing achievement in coronary heart disease and diabetes care, for example, we promote improvement in data quality, which ultimately translates into more effectively delivered healthcare.

The National Service Frameworks have driven the improvements in data quality and disease register development. Creativity has been utilised wherever possible to assist practices in this type of development. It is important to make every part of the process useful, practical and practice-centred remembering that our ultimate aim is to improve patient care, and good quality information can do that.

### What is the information collected for?

While computer entries are a vital help in delivering clinical care to the individual patient, aggregating the data provides information. It can show how well we manage secondary prevention of ischaemic heart disease

or influenza immunisation. Making sense of such information requires comparisons – how a practice compares to others – and context – details about the practice, the needs of the population and local priorities.

### Using the collected data

Only when a practice team fully understands the information it has, can it effectively plan action to improve its care. Such understanding is needed to meet the targets in the National Service Frameworks. The information can be used to support clinical governance and to generate the background for appraisals and revalidation. Accurate and complete data will be vital for the quality elements of the proposed new GP contract.

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**Improving data quality**

The PCT has a Data Quality Facilitator who visits GP practices and examines the quality of data and helps practices to improve it. Some of the computers also have what is called PRODIGY, which is a computer aid to clinical decision making bringing the Na-

tional Service Framework or NICE guidance on tap for clinicians to ensure that they have done everything. It even produces patient leaflets.

**Records management**

Records management is an important part of

using and storing patient's details. A strategy has been produced in order to ensure the safety and accuracy of the information stored on patients (both electronically and hard copies).

**Yoga VS Pilates**

It seems that these days you can hardly turn on a television without hearing someone mention Pilates or Yoga. Articles on Pilates and Yoga fill numerous magazines and it seems "everyone who is anyone" is doing one or the other. Why all the excitement? What is so special about these techniques? What are the similarities and differences between Pilates and Yoga?

Yoga, as we all know it, is aimed to unite the mind, the body, and the spirit. Yogis view that the mind and the body are one, and that if it is given the right tools and taken to the right environment, it can find harmony and heal itself. Yoga therefore is considered therapeutic. It helps you become more aware of your body's posture, alignment and patterns of movement. It makes the body more flexible and helps you relax even in the midst of a stress stricken environment. This is one of the foremost reasons why people want to start practicing Yoga - to feel more fit, to be more energetic, be happier and peaceful. The Yoga movements are performed, mostly, in a group setting on a special Yoga mat with an aid of a Yoga instructor. The body's own weight is used for resistance and a great deal of focus is accorded to the flow from one posture into the other. There are many different Yoga styles and they differ in their emphasis. No one style is better than the other. The Style you use is a matter of personal preference or a matter of need.

**Yoga Styles and Poses**

Vinyasa Yoga, for example, makes use of modified yoga poses that are designed to meet the specific needs of an individual and to enhance healing, flexibility and strength of joints. The poses also intend to promote the feeling of well-being and strength. Practices may also include meditation, reflection, study and other classic elements, but the emphasis of this branch of Yoga practice is on coordinating breath and movement. As you can imagine, given the scope of practice, the inherent therapeutic applications and the heritage of the lineage, the training requirements for teacher certification are extensive.

Pilates seek to reach much the same goals, also via a series of controlled movements. The major difference is that the Pilates technique not only has a full complement of mat-work, but it incorporates work on the Pilates machines. The emphasis of the exercises is to strengthen the abdominals, improve posture, stabilize and lengthen the spine, improve balance and overall strength. Pilates gives you a longer, leaner, dancer-like line.

**Pilates Works the Whole Body**

Unlike many other training programs, Pilates works the whole body, emphasizing control, precision and concentration in both the mind and the body. Movements are not performed rapidly or repeated excessively instead, the focus is on quality not quantity. The abdominal muscles, lower back and buttocks

("powerhouse") serve as the center of all movement, allowing the rest of the body to move freely. This focus on core stabilization makes one stronger from the inside out and is critical for the advancement of the client. The low impact nature of Pilates makes it ideal for injury prevention and rehabilitation. Its six principles-concentration, control, centering, breathing, flow and precision-train the body to move efficiently with minimal impact on the body. The balance between strength and flexibility creates a healthy, vigorous and symmetrical workout for all muscle groups resulting in a leaner, more balanced, and stronger body.

**Working With Yoga and Pilates in Conjunction**

If after reading about both techniques you are still left with a question of which of these two fitness techniques is right for you then here is the answer: Do them both in conjunction! The nature of the techniques makes it easy for them to complement each other. Get the stretch from Yoga and keep it from Pilates. Strengthen your abdominals on the reformer and watch your poses improve. Join the breathing techniques of Pilates and meditative aspect of Yoga into your daily routine and see the stress of your everyday life, begin to dissipate. Both techniques are time-proven, established, and with the help of an experienced instructor, you will surely reach the goals you set up for yourself!

**Contact CFUS (corporate)**

The CFUS Corporation \* 4859 West Slauson Ave. Suite 219 \* Los Angeles, California 90056  
323.298.8502—office \* 310.388.5988—fax \* info@cfus.com \* http://www.cfus.com

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